



ADS

Action pour les Droits
Solidaires

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Siège social: Av. Du Rond-Point no. 27, Q. Les Volcans,
Commune de Goma, Ville de Goma en RDC.

Goma, 15th February 2025.

Ref: 001/03/2025/ADS

Hon. Willy Manzi Ngarambe,
Vice Governor in charge of Policies, Administrative and Judicial Matters
Goma, North Kivu,
Democratic Republic of Congo,

Dear Sir,

Re: "Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cases in territories under the administration of AFC/M23".

Action for Solidarity Rights / *Action pour les Droits Solidaires (ADS)* is pleased to submit the enclosed advocacy paper calling for consideration of emergency actions for prevention, protection and response to cases of Gender Based Violence (GBV), particularly Sexual Gender-Based Violence.

ADS remains at your disposal for further direct and/or written engagement regarding this advocacy paper.

Sincerely,

Yassin Tusingwire
Executive Director, ADS.
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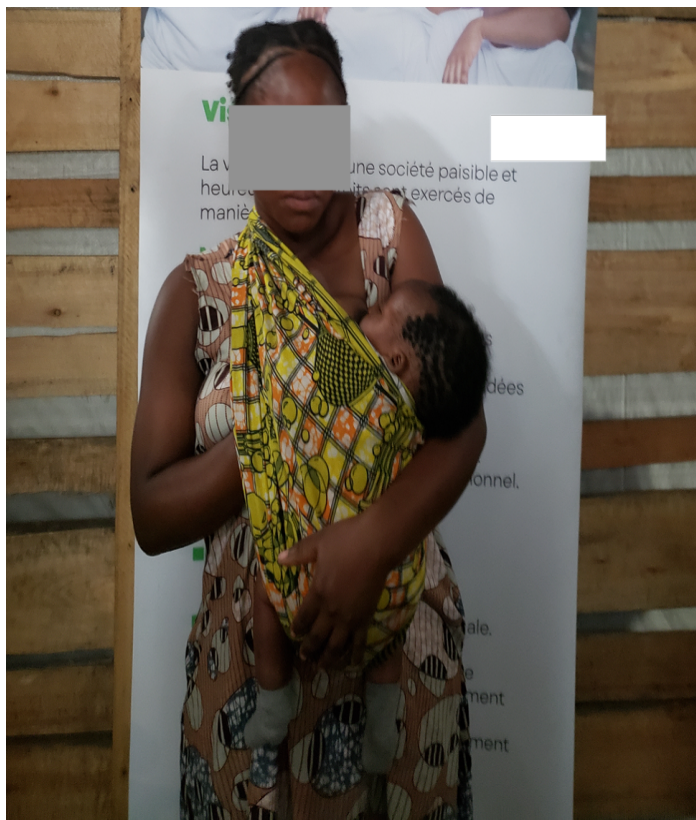


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“Addressing cases of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in territories under the administration of AFC/M23”.

Advocacy paper



Young girl in Lushagala IDP camp with a baby born as a result of defilement.



2 young girls, 11 and 13 years of age that were defiled in Bulengo IDP Camp

Photo credit: Gladys & Nathalie, ADS Research Team in the IDP camps.

February, 2025.

About Action for Solidarity Rights/ *Action pour les Droits Solidaires (ADS)*

Action for Solidarity Rights, registered as *Action pour les Droits Solidaires (ADS)* is a women led peace-building and social justice organization that contributes to a fair and peaceful society in which fundamental human rights and freedoms are realized sustainably. ADS is compliant with all the requirements of the Law no. 004/2001 of July 20, 2001, laying down general provisions applicable to non-profit associations and Public Utility Establishments in the Democratic Republic of Congo. ADS legal personality is decreed by **ARRETE MINISTERIEL NO335/CAB/ME/MIN/J&GS/2024 OF 10 FEBRUARY 2024.**

Protecting and promoting women's rights is one of ADS's priority objectives, but also integral to all other objectives of ADS. ADS's programming is deliberate at addressing systemic social structures and practices in which women's rights are violated.

Rationale for this advocacy paper

Women and girls in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) particularly the Eastern DRC have been victims of Gender Based Violence (GBV) particularly Sexual Gender Based Violence. Despite the presence of United Nations Mission - MONUSCO, East African Community Regional Force in DRC (EACRF), the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (ICGLR-EJVM), SAMIDRC, thousands of women and young girls have been raped and defiled respectively.

As a result of war and armed conflict, Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) has been employed both for pleasure and as a weapon of war, resulting into hundreds of thousands of women sexually abused. For instance, by end February 2025, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reported over 50,000 cases of gender-based violence in 2023 and over 56,000 cases in 2024. According to the same source, nearly 500 cases of sexual violence were reported within a single week in the Goma area, including more than 150 involving children.

In December and January 2025, ADS visited three camps of Bulengo in Goma, Lushagala in Mugunga and Bushagara in Nyiragongo where testimonies of rape and defilement of young girls and women of between 11 and 70 years of age were recorded. According to testimonies, thousands of women and young girls were sexually abused and some had been targeted on the basis of ethnic profiling.

Moreover, ADS observed many cases of unwanted pregnancies and children born out of rape and defilement. The trauma resulting from these heinous crimes and the impact of war have far reaching consequences to the victims for several generations to come. Many of the victims have gone back to their villages with pain, perpetual



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indignity, trauma, many infected with HIV and other STDs; yet, with no hope for justice. Moreover, while these victims have returned back to their villages, they continue to live a cruel and life challenging difficulties such as food insecurity, limited or no source energy and the general lack of basic livelihood essentials.

Moreover, the current absence of the judicial system as a result of war presents a serious risk and danger to women. The absence of structures to report perpetrators of GBV/SGBV does not only expose women to danger but also induce perpetrators whose actions they know will not be investigated and punished.

Proposed priority actions

- a. Establish a gender desk/bureau de genre at communes or other decentralized level in all the territories under the administration of AFC/M23. The Gender desk/ Bureau de genre should be mandated with the functions of:
 - Responding to GBV/SGBV and child abuse related cases;
 - Coordinating with relevant actors including CSOs, local governing structures, etc. in preventing and protecting women and girls from SGBV;
 - Supporting victims of GBV/SGBV and child abuse with emergency care and through referrals to relevant service providers;
 - Documenting evidence for criminal investigation but also for future gender related policy improvement;
 - Providing any other relevant support in accordance with the available means.
- b. Initiate consultations and establish working relationships with all relevant stakeholders; especially, CSOs working in the domain of prevention, protection and response to GBV/SGBV and protection of children from abuses. The consultations should aim at strengthening GBV prevention, protection and response interventions for maximizing impact.
- c. Increase awareness raising against all acts of GBV/SGBV and child abuse.